

Multi-cultural Education: Supporting and Enhancing Bilingualism in Mainstream Classrooms

Seminar for Principals and Teachers

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Take a Moment to Reflect With a Partner

- What do you hope to learn today?
- How has your student population changed?
- Can immigrant students integrate into the mainstream society and maintain their home language?

Guiding Questions

- What challenges does linguistic diversity bring?
- What is the relationship of students' learning in their first and second languages and why does it matter?
- Can knowledge of best practice in the U.S. support the work in Finland?
- What are the implications of these understandings in your role as an educator?

Big Ideas For Today's Session

- Students' status in the society affect attitudes about bilingualism and multiculturalism.
- In the U.S., issues of linguistic diversity are connected to the larger issues of race and poverty
- Many steps can be taken to meet the needs of a linguistically diverse population.
- When we organize instruction with the needs of second language learners in mind, every student in the classroom and school will benefit.

Linguistic Diversity...

... includes all the students who attend the school

Monolingual native speakers

Monolingual second language learners

Students who are already bilingual

In the U.S., successful schools meet the needs of second language learners, by putting linguistic diversity at the center of their work.



Essential Knowledge for Linguistically Diverse Settings

- An awareness of the larger political context
- First and second language acquisition
- The relationship of students' learning in their first and second languages
- Specific strategies for instruction that allow for differentiation.

Turn and Talk #1

What is the linguistic and cultural diversity in your school?

What language groups?

What levels of proficiency?

What levels of prior academic experience?

What resources exist in the larger community to support them?

In the U.S. - Bilingualism for Some

Bilingualism is desirable for people from the dominant culture

Immigrants are supposed to learn English and lose their first language

Second language learners are often seen as a different from the "normal" students - white, middle class, native-English speakers.



In the U.S. - A Deficit View

Immigrants students are often seen as “broken” and teachers think they have to “fix” them.

Many mainstream teachers see second language learners of English as a problem in their classrooms.

Teachers too often think that if students don't know something in English, they don't know anything.

What is a Danger?

Loss of Communication Between Generations

Without strong messages from schools and the larger community, immigrant children often

- abandon their first language
- reject their home culture and
- lose the ability to communicate with their families.

This can weaken the family structure - which has long term consequences.

The Global Context

In an increasingly global society, it is critical to prepare children and adults who can

interact with
learn from
work for
care about

people who are different from them.

It is more about attitude and willingness, than the precise steps to take

The Global Context

Increasing cultural diversity can bring conflicts

Schools need to plan ahead for solving problems

Staff members need time to

Express themselves

Build trust

Acknowledge differences

Make agreements



Some of the Challenges

- Learning through a second language is much more than just "learning a second language"
- Teaching students who are learning through their second language is more challenging for teachers.
- When teachers and students come from different cultural and language backgrounds, there can be many misunderstandings in both directions.

Some of the Challenges

The status of students' language and culture in the larger society can affect academic success.

It is important to ask if learning a second language in school will add on to or replace the first language.

What We Have Learned in the U.S.

Different Kinds of Programs are Possible

- All English Instruction
- First Language Support in the Content Areas
- First Language Support in Literacy
- Total Bilingual Program - Content And Literacy

What We Have Learned in the U.S.

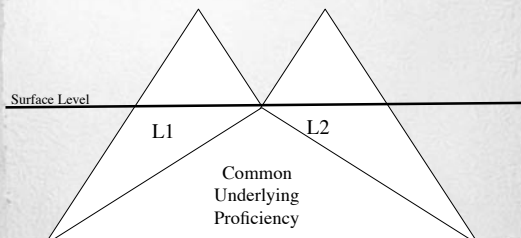
All kinds of programs can be successful.

They vary in

- How long it will take for students to become academically successful
- How much teachers will need to modify the curriculum to make it understandable to all students
- Students' potential for lifetime bilingualism

Language Acquisition Some Basic Understandings that Guide School Organization

First and Second Language Acquisition: Common Underlying Proficiency



Adapted from Jim Cummins by John Hilliard, IRC

The Conceptual Reservoir

The brain is a 'conceptual reservoir'

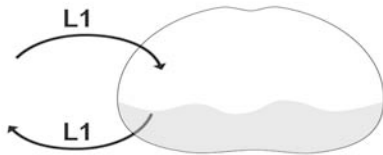
You can add to and take from it through any language a person knows.

GOAL: fill the conceptual reservoir as deeply as possible.

Challenge for teachers:

To make sure that students are learning even when they don't speak the language of instruction well.

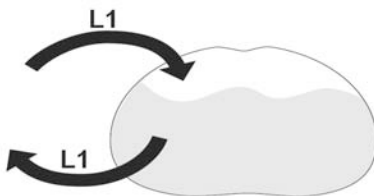
Conceptual Reservoir



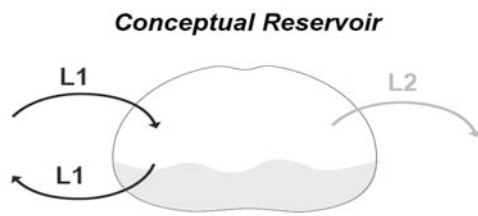
Adding to the reservoir through the first language

Deepening the Reservoir Strengthening the Pathways

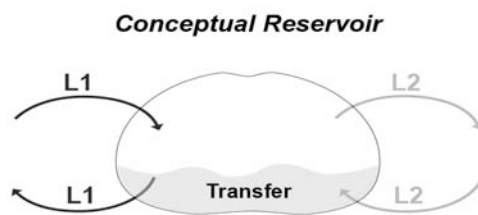
Conceptual Reservoir



Learning a Second Language Taking from the Reservoir

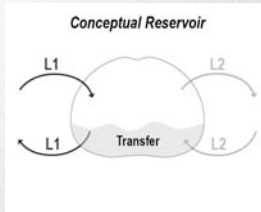


Using Both Languages



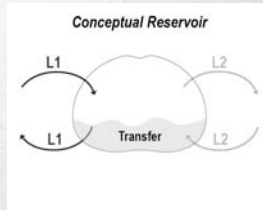
TRANSFER: Taking what is known in one context and using it in another

- The more you know in your first language, the easier it will be to acquire a second.
- When you learn something in school in your second language, you can also learn how to express that knowledge in your first.



TRANSFER: Taking what is known in one context and using it in another

- Transfer isn't automatic
- Teachers can help students transfer knowledge from one setting and/or language to another.
- Parents can play a critical role in this process.



Learning Through Two Languages

Students benefit when teachers organize instruction to help them take what they know in one language and express it through the other.

To Promote "Additive Bilingualism"

Focus instruction on "deepening the reservoir"
Value what students bring with them as a starting point regardless of their
cultural backgrounds
status in the larger society

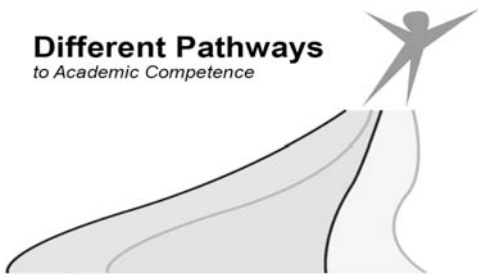
Turn and Talk #2

- Are all languages equally good for adding to the conceptual reservoir?
- How does the status of the students' language and culture affect how teachers view their potential?

Classroom Instruction What are the implications for school-wide organization?

In the U.S. most teachers use strategies based only on understandings of how students learn through their first language - the Red Road

Different Pathways *to Academic Competence*



Students learning through their second language are trying to reach the same academic goals as native speakers. However, the road they follow to get there will be different.

Different Pathways *to Academic Competence*



In order to be truly effective, teachers need to use strategies better suited to the second language pathway - the Blue Road.

Different Pathways *to Academic Competence*



Teaching Through a Second Language

It is not the same to “teach Finnish” and “teach through Finnish”

It is important to have strategies for both
Teaching Content
and
Teaching Language

Teaching Through a Second Language

Second language learners need to learn the same content as native speakers

and

They need to learn the language native speakers already know

Social Language

Academic Language

To Teach Well Through a Second Language

Teachers do whatever is necessary to make the content meaningful and understandable.

They give students opportunities to

- interact with
- act on
- connect to
- talk about
- read about
- write about

the most important ideas and information

Teaching Through a Second Language

Begin with the most important understandings and make intentional connections between

Concepts and

how we talk about them

how we represent the ideas in writing

how we can read about the information

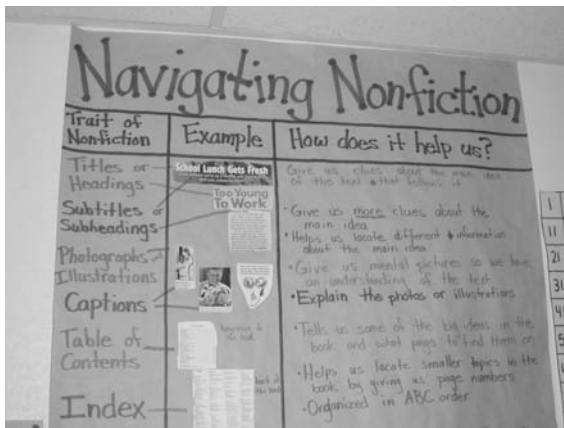
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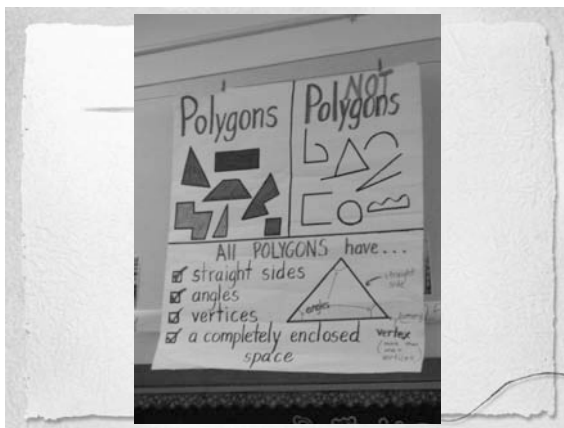
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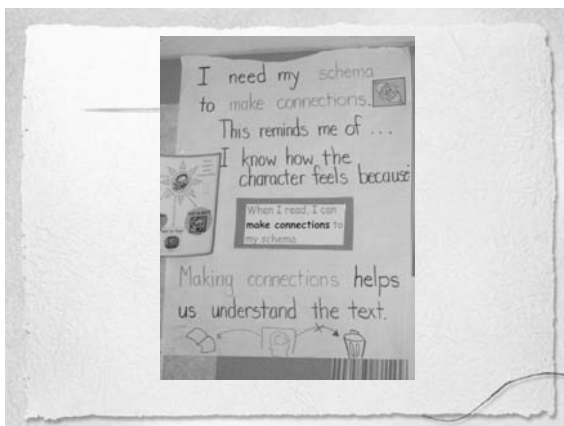
movement

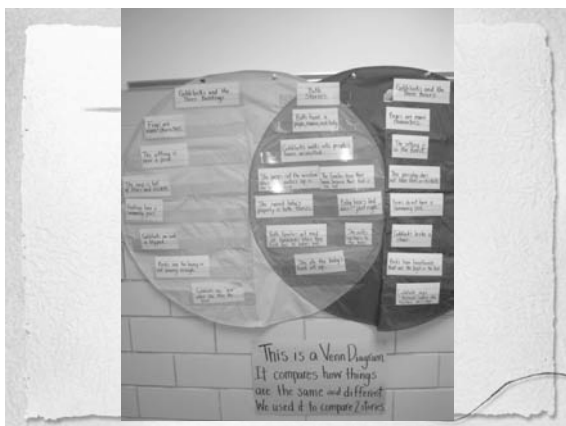
modeling

demonstration.







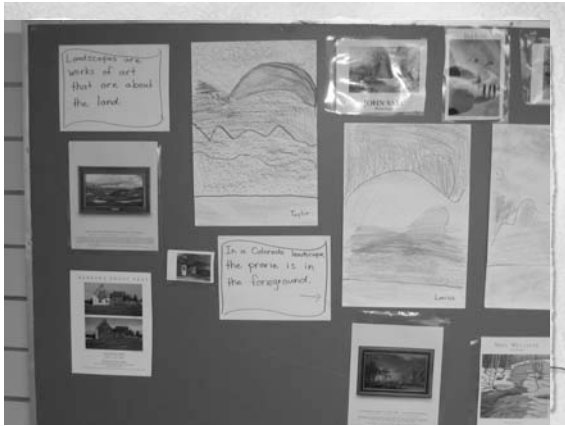


Some Examples of Best Practice in the US What are the Implications for Leaders?

To increase effectiveness, schools...

- Use the same visual images in more than one place to connect what students are learning across their day in any language
- Make rules and expectations consistent across grade levels and subject matters.
- Integrate curriculum and align instruction across subject areas
- Organize instruction with the needs of second language learners in mind, knowing every student in the classroom benefits





Grouping Students

In linguistically diverse schools
students can be grouped
in three ways

Grouping by Language Proficiency

First Language (Mother Tongue) - Native Finnish speakers in Finnish, Native Swedish speakers in Swedish etc.

Mixed Groups Native and second language learners of the instructional language. This is typically the mainstream classroom.

Second Language - All second language learners working in their second language
(May include students from different native languages)

Things to Think About...

- The opportunities each group provides for
 - Learning content
 - Speaking and listening
 - Reading and writing
- The challenges or limitations of the different groups
- The strategies that work best to meet the needs of the students in the group

Turn and Talk # 3

Think About Grouping at Your School

- How much time do students from different language backgrounds spend in the different groups?
 - Mother tongue
 - Second language
 - Mixed groups
- Is this the same for all languages?
- Do the instructional strategies change to meet the needs of all the students?
- What are the implications of your answers for organizing resources school wide?

Some Examples of Best Practice in the U.S. What are the Implications for Leaders?

To support the Mother Tongue, schools

- Put resources in the school library in the home languages of the students
- Believe children will acquire more of their second language when their home language is valued
- Create classrooms where all students can see themselves reflected
- Incorporate an anti-bias perspective into the curriculum for all students



Some Examples of Best Practice in the U.S. What are the Implications for Leaders?

Even if teachers can't don't speak the students' home language schools still....

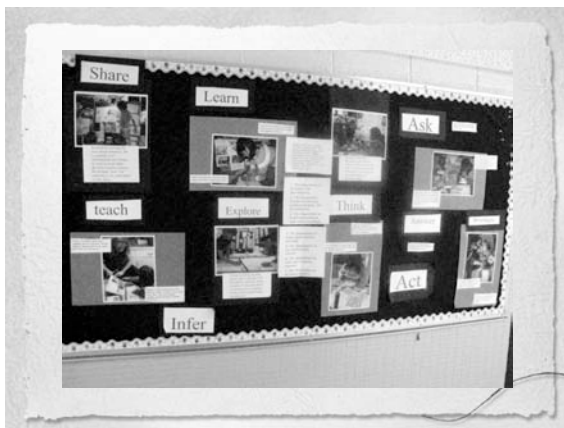
- Show interest in the students and their hopes and goals
- Find out what students know - build from there
- Find and use materials that acknowledge students' cultures.
- Assign peer helpers and build friendships
- Help students feel like they belong in their classrooms

Some Examples of Best Practice in the US What are the Implications for Leaders?

To support the first language, schools

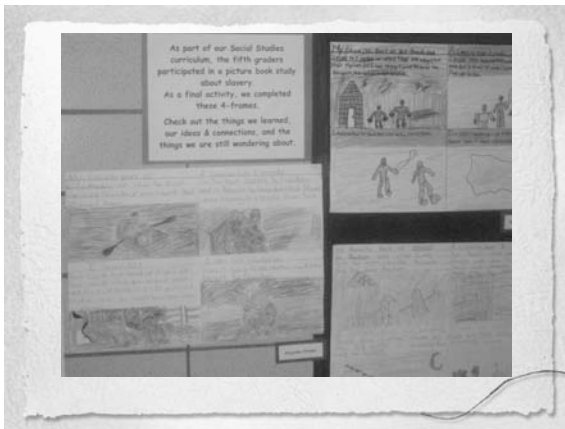
- Find resources to share in the languages of the students
- Group students by language proficiency. (even just for a few minutes)
- Allow students to use their first language to understand the content.

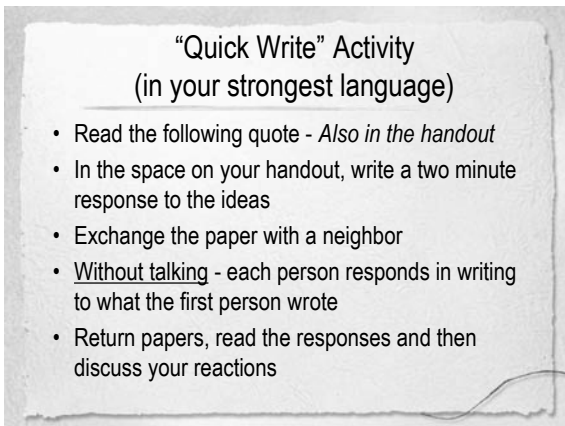












Quick Write:
What is Cultural Competence?

According to Peter Block (1997)
Cultural Competence is the ability to function well when there are cultural differences.
Cultural Competence is a journey of continual learning. We never fully arrive at our destination. All students need to understand and respect themselves and their own culture, as well as the other cultures in the school. To build strong multicultural schools, educators must see cultural competence as a part of the instructional curriculum. It is important to plan cross-cultural interactions that include all students.

Why is Cultural Competence so Important?

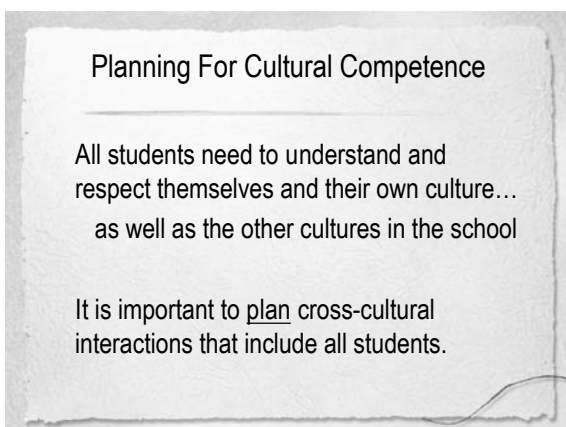
People from different cultures and countries have different experiences and expectations about schooling.

Language barriers can intimidate new immigrants and prevent them from taking part fully in the opportunities provided.









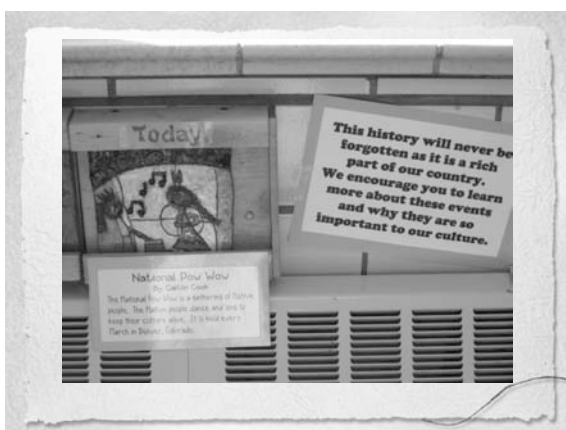
Planning For Cultural Competence

In the U.S. we have learned that just
“putting students together” does not result in
cross cultural friendships or understanding.
Interactions need to be purposeful.
Students need to practice communicating with
others who are different from themselves.









Turn and Talk #4 -- Educational Equity
Questions are in the Handout

Teachers ask about themselves...

 About the students...

 About the curriculum...

 About the classroom...

What other questions would you ask?









Establish Two-Way Communication With Families

- Build trust
- Break down barriers that might be created by language and culture
- Establish mutual respect
- Accept that everyone is a learner
- Make a joint commitment to the good of the whole community.

Some Examples of Best Practice in the U.S. to Help Immigrant Families

To Build Understanding, schools

- Hold orientations and other regularly scheduled meetings to exchange information and solicit questions and concerns.
- Are explicit about school routines and requirements such as school timetables and calendars
- Help immigrants and residents build personal relationships and break down barriers
- Create connections between newcomers and long time residents by linking families one on one.

Final Reflection

- What steps might you take to promote multicultural education and bilingualism in the mainstream classroom?
- What are the 2 or 3 ideas that most interest you?
- Who could you work with to plan for any changes?
- What kind of support would you need?
